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ABSTRACT

A "Gateway to Success" Mock Job Fair Program was conducted at Federal Correction Institute, Terminal Island. Prior to participation, inmates and employers were administered a pre-program needs assessment questionnaire to determine expectations. Results of the program evaluations (completed by inmates and employers) documented a need for future programs such as this one. The inmates unanimously felt they were better prepared for a job search upon release as a result of program participation. The inmates' self-esteem and confidence developed and expanded. Local employers were pleasantly surprised and impressed at how well the inmates were prepared and how motivated they were to return as productive, working members of society. Recommendations were to expand the program to include other inmates and additional industries and to develop mock job fair projects at other facilities in the federal prison system. (Appendixes include the pre-program assessments and job fair evaluations with tabulated results.) (YLB)

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SUMMARY REPORT AND EVALUATION

First Annual Mock Job Fair
"Gateway to Success"

Federal Correctional Institution
Terminal Island

presented to

Sylvia McCollum
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Washington, DC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Methodology

Prior to participation in the "Gateway to Success" Mock Job Fair Program at Federal Correction Institute Terminal Island, a Pre-program Needs Assessment questionnaire was administered to determine inmate and employer expectations.

Additionally, evaluations were completed for both the Inmate and Employer groups following the Mock Job Fair.

Summary of Findings

Inmate Evaluations:

Responses to the Inmate Job Fair Evaluations indicate an overall positive job fair experience. When asked "What was your overall impression of the Job Fair?", fourteen out of seventeen inmates responded positively. A random sample of comments taken from the questionnaire is listed below:

- "A wonderful experience, I really enjoyed it";
- "Most positive situation in all my prison years";
- "Very helpful";
- "A top class for pre-release men";
- "Totally fulfilled my expectations".

Included in the questionnaire were comments regarding what other businesses the inmates would like to have seen at the job fair. A sample of the answers is listed below, with the number of responses indicated in parentheses:

- Construction (3);
- Truck Driving (3);
- Health industry (1);
- Welding (1).

Employer Evaluations:

On the whole, the employers viewed the Mock Job Fair as successful. Twenty-five out of twenty-seven respondents indicated that their expectations were met (22 strongly agree, 3 agree).

The negative view towards hiring ex-offenders appears to have been improved with participation in the Mock Job Fair. Prior to taking part in the Mock Job Fair, 10 employers expressed hesitancy toward hiring an ex-offender ("not sure" = 8; "agree" = 1; "strongly agree" = 1). Upon completion of the Mock Job Fair, 21 employers indicated they would now consider hiring an ex-offender ("agree" = 9; "strongly agree" = 12). Of the 27 employers included in the job fair, only

2 prohibited hiring ex-offenders on the basis of company policy. In addition, when asked how the employers felt about the impact of this program on crime and recidivism, 9 responded "better" and 16 responded "much better".

When asked about the percentage of ex-offenders who qualified for employment, it was found that more than half (56%) met all employers' prerequisites. The general consensus was that the inmates have acquired the necessary skill levels, and shown the ability to follow orders, were disciplined, and had strong motivation. The following is a list of benefits the employers stated in hiring ex-offenders:

- "Inmates would make good employees because of their commitment, attitude and desire to succeed";
- "It's better for the community to have the person productive and paying taxes";
- "The opportunity for a second chance".

Finally, the employers were asked what three primary questions they would like answered when interviewing an offender. The answers to this question were all very similar, with the majority echoing the following sentiments:

- "What was their felony / conviction?"
- "Have they apologized?"
- "What lessons have they learned?"
- "Why should I hire them?"
- "What skills do they have?"
- "How will my company benefit from hiring this inmate?"

Conclusions

The results of the evaluations document a need for future programs such as the Gateway to Success Mock Job Fair. The inmates unanimously felt they were better prepared for a job search upon release as a result of participating in the program. The inmate's self-esteem and confidence have developed and expanded as a result of participating in the mock job fair. Local employers were pleasantly surprised and impressed at how well the inmates were prepared and how motivated they were to return as productive, working members of society. The program should be expanded to include other inmates who did not get a chance to participate, and additional industries (e.g. trucking and construction) should be represented in the employer group. Based on the success of the Gateway to Success Mock Job Fair at the Federal Corrections Institution at Terminal Island, this report recommends that mock job fair projects should be developed at other facilities in the federal prison system.

Inmate Evaluations

Pre-Program Needs Assessment

Pre Program – Inmate Needs Assessment – Questionnaire
25 responses

First Annual Mock Job Fair

Federal Correctional Institution – Terminal Island

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What jobs interest you?

Dental Technician, Hazard Materials, Quality Assurance, Metal Fabrications, Culinary, Catfish Farming, Agricultural, Emergency Medical Technician, Firefighter, Hair Stylist/Barber, Truck Driver, Weight Trainer, Shipping & Receiving Drug Abuse Counselor, Warehouse Computer Technician, Importing/Exporting, Electronics, Computer Operator, Drafting, Art, Janitorial, Physical Fitness and Nutrition, Escort Service, Plumbing, Genreal Maintenance, Prop Maker, Health Food Industry, Tow Truck Driver, Forklift Operator, Photo Lab Tech, Long Shoreman, Executive, Business Management.

What job skills do you have?

Truck driver, forklift operator, inventory, warehouse, shipping & receiving, computer literate, fabricate dental prosthetics, read & interpret blueprints, metal sheet fabrication, driver, fast food worker, landscaping, barber, volunteer firefighter, tractor operator, sales, customer service, factory worker, food service, hospital technology, certified mechanic, data processing, stocker, house inspections, promotions, writer, waiter, electrician, electronics test tech, electronic cable assembly, medical assistant skills, prop maker, auto mechanic, security, janitorial, disc brake caliper rebuilder, painter, drug abuse counselor, masonry, demolition, financial consulting, editing, songwriting, quality assurance inspection.

2. What do you expect to learn by attending this job fair.

A. ___	how to ask questions during an how to write a resume	**n=20=80%**
B ___	how to apply for a job	**n=16=64%**
C. ___	interview	**n=17=68%**
D. ___	how to answer questions during an interview	**n=18=72%**
E. ___	what jobs are available	**n=19=76%**
F. ___	other – add your comments and thoughts.	

Any and all information available
Hopefully to get connected with a corporation to start working immediately
Where to find jobs that I am good at

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3. What other information would you like to learn about

A. ___ families **n=3=12%**
B. ___ college/addional training **n=17=68%**
C. ___ health issues **n=5=20%**
D. ___ other

Nutrition
Specific jobs in the entry level computer operating field.
Agriculture
Contacts for future employment
How to start my own company.

4. Any other comments and thoughts.

Information on how to get a book or screenplay read and published.
Job opportunities in the San Francisco Bay area.
Information on jobs available in my area.

Inmate Evaluations

Inmate Mock Job Fair Evaluation
17 responses

First Annual Mock Job Fair

Federal Correctional Institution – Terminal Island

NAME: _____ REGISTRATION NUMBER _____

1. What was your perception of the training leading up to the Job Fair?

I think that the training that we took before the job fair was great.
Excellence
Very good. It really helped you prepare for a job. Covered every aspect
It was good
Great
Excellent
Very informative
Introduce us to the people.
It was good training. I think it covered all the bases.
Very good
Writing a job resume.
Good
Good
I thought the training was good, especially the resume writing part.
OK
Very helpful, the training was maybe a little too long.
I think the program was very helpful because it gave me a lot of output on what I need to do for myself as well as others.

2. What would make the training more helpful?

N/A
Well, for the first time, I thought everything went well.
A little more mock type interviewing
Everything was fine.
More classes
Larger study area
Better training facility. More room.
The training was fine.
Same advice all the way around.
None
I don't know what you could have done to make it more helpful.
More job

Maybe 2 weeks of training instead of 3 weeks.
I felt they should of introduce us the people before we started interviewing.

3. Do you feel more prepared for a successful job search after your participation in the Job Fair?

Yes
Yes
Yes, I feel more secure and relaxed about finding a job.
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
No!
Yes
Yes
Yes, I really do.
No
Definitely, this job fair helped my preparation for my future job search.
I felt the mock job fair was very helpful in my weak area.

4. What did you learn during the feedback sessions from the employers at the end of your interviews?

That even though we have a record people are still willing to hire us.
I really learned how to present myself, and how to have confidence.
I learned they are very open and that there are a lot of possibilities.
I learned to sit straight and keep eye contact. And speak clear to the employer.
Learned more how to work on weak areas.
The remarks were helpful to me, to know and be aware of my errors.
It's best to be prepared and it's good to think of questions that is not routinely asked.
I learn how to fill out resume.
To be less nervous, to ask more questions, and be more confident.
Not to talk too much.
That I still have my conversation skills and can mingle with the norm.
That we are not thought of as cast aways from the job world.
To be more precise in my answers to questions.
They were very sincere in their evaluations. I have more skills than I thought.
I felt really good about the feedback the employers gave us about certain situations that we should be aware of at an interview.

5. Which question was the most difficult for you to answer during your interview

None
Well, to be honest it was kind all for me because I never been interviewed for a job, but once I went through one or two it was easy.
About being in prison there was a tendency to talk too much about it.
Explaining about being incarcerated
What made me most qualified.
What I expect from the employer.
More than one arrest history.
None

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About my felony.
Why did I think I should be hired by the company
They were fine
Tell me a little about yourself
None.
The hardest question was the one about being locked up.
Confident
My felony conviction and the long period of time I was incarcerated.
Where would I like to be in 5 years.

6. Which other types of businesses would you have like to have seen at the Job Fair?

None that I can think of.
Truck delivery
Someone in the health business
More trucking companies.
Warehouse, open.
Pretty much covered all.
Construction. Trucking industry.
Quite a few things.
More construction companies, manufacturing, welding, mechanical
.Construction business.
More sales jobs.
Larger companies.
None
Nightclubs.
Yes
More business that relates to machinists and tool and die makers.
I really didn't see a problem with other types of businesses because everybody got what they asked for at the program.

7. What was your overall impression of the Job Fair?

Great
A wonderful experience. I really enjoyed it.
Most positive situation in all my prison years.
It was great.
Great.
A top class for pre-release men.
Totally fulfilled my expectations.
It was very great.
Better than I expected. Got a lot of experience from it.
Very positive.
It was very good!
Very helpful.
I liked it and thought it was well planned. I was glad to participate.
Participation
Great. Good for the inmates.
To let society know that there are good people in prison even though we have done something wrong.

8 What other changes would you make to the Job Fair?

None
To me it was wonderful. Personally I wouldn't change a thing.

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Stay the course – it seems to have worked well the way it was.
None
None
A larger room. Thank you.
Time on call outs cut back some … for those that finish assignment early or timely.
None
None that I can think of right now.
None.
Everything was good. Maybe just a little more organization.
Introduction made with the employers before and after the job fair. Videoed so others can view how we did.
None
Maybe not as many classes because my boss didn't like me missing so much work.
More businesses.
Keep it the same. It will automatically get better with time. I feel the best part of this job fair was it gave me the confidence to speak in front of people without being nervous. By the time I was into my second interview I felt very comfortable and confident. The preparation by Mrs. Seifert and Mr. Cowlsworth was extremely professional and very detailed. I've tried to find things that would make this experience better for the inmates in the future but to be honest this job fair was done correctly in every aspect.
I would like to see this program continue, and see more inmates participate in this program because it is very helpful.

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Employer Pre-Program Questionnaire

Employer Pre-Evaluation Summary – 15 Responses

First Annual Mock Job Fair - "Gateway to Success"
Federal Correctional Institution – Terminal Island

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMPANY/AGENCY

1. What are your expectations for the job fair?

I expect to evaluate the potential for future candidates for employment.
Help people who want a second chance to turn their life around.
Provide inmates with opportunity to interview with me and learn from the experience.
Unknown
I don't have any expectations. I hope to offer offenders an opportunity to practice what they will face when they are released.
To assist inmates in preparing for employment once released.
To generate a mutual awareness that will positively effect the ex-felon to mainstream into the workplace/society.
To provide advice and encouragement for those looking to start lives over in the traditional working world.
To become informed about how such persons are being prepared, and how motivated they are for this transition.
To help educate and inform the inmates on techniques that will aid them in obtaining gainful employment.
Community service – help inmates with job interview preparation and coaching.
To asssess what candidates will be eligible for hire with my company.
For me to pass on some knowledge to help others.
Find good candidates.
Community Service
To contribute to development of effective communication and interviewing skills for the inmates – helping them to be prepared and overcome obstacles once released.

2. What percentage of the interviewing applicants do you anticipate being qualified for employment with your organization?

☐ 0-25% **n=9=64%** ☐ 26-50% **n=3=21%** ☐ 51-75% ☐ 76-99% **n=2=14%** ☐ 100%

3. Does your company prohibit the hiring of ex-felons? ☐ YES **n=2=14%** ☐ NO **n=12=85%**

4. Do you feel that your involvement in the mock job fair will have a positive impact on reducing crime and recidivism?

☐ YES **n=13=92%** ☐ NO **n=1=7%**

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5. Have you ever participated in other mock job fairs?

☐ YES n=4=26% ☐ NO n=11=73%

6. Please offer additional comments

It would be nice to supply employers with information regarding incentives available for hiring ex-offenders.
With certain restrictions we can hire ex-felons. Job related felonies are excluded i.e. burglary, theft, etc., as it relates to the manufacturing environment.
Invite me back.
This is a wonderful and greatly needed event for the inmates. It will help them to identify areas of themselves that need to be imporved in order to be attractive to a potential employer. Hopefully they will take the experience seriously and will take steps to improve. They would additionally benefit with further coaching and support.

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EMPLOYER JOB FAIR EVALUATION

Employer Evaluation Summary – 25 Responses

First Annual Mock Job Fair - "Gateway to Success"
Federal Correctional Institution – Terminal Island

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

COMPANY/AGENCY _____

Thank you for participating in the job fair today. You have shared very valuable information with the participants. You have touched their lives.

Please evaluate how you feel the job fair went by expressing your agreement or disagreement with the following

Circle the number that most closely represents your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
The job fair was well organized. **Average = 4.8**	1	2	3	4	5
The job fair met my expectations. **Average = 4.84**	1	2	3	4	5
The interviews were well prepared. **Average = 4.64**	1	2	3	4	5
Before this event , I would NOT have considered hiring an ex-offender. **Average = 2.08**	1	2	3	4	5
Having experienced this event, I would NOW consider hiring an ex-offender. **Average = 4.34**	1	2	3	4	5
The staff was courteous and helpful. **Average = 4.80**	1	2	3	4	5

1. What percentage of the people interviewed were qualified for employment with your organization?

☐ 0-25% n=6=25% ☐ 26-50% n=4=16% ☐ 51-75% n=5=20% ☐ 76-99% n=6=25% ☐ 100% n=3=12%

2. After participating in the mock job fair, would you consider hiring an ex-offender who has participated in a rehabilitation program

☐ YES n=23=92% ☐ NO n=2=8%

3. If no, what concerns do you have?

The two "NO" responses were due to company policies prohibiting the hiring of ex-offenders.

4. If yes, what benefits do you see in hiring the ex-offenders.

The return to society of the inmate.
A return to the family unit.
The opportunity for a second chance.
It's better for the community to have the person productive and paying taxes
Inmates would make good employees because of their commitment, attitude and desire to succeed.
Inmates have acquired the necessary skill levels and shown the ability to follow orders, are disciplined and have strong motivation.

5. In interviewing an ex-offender, what are the three primary questions you want answered during the interview?

What was their felony/conviction?
Have they apologized?
What lessons have they learned?
Why should I hire them?
What skills do they have?
What are their strengths and weaknesses?
What is their motivation for seeking a job?
How will my company benefit by hiring this inmate?
What are the inmate's goals
What is the applicant's job and education history?

6. What follow-up activities to today's activities would benefit you as an employer.

Make the job fair a required part of the pre-release program.
Provide support to the applicants after release through support groups.
Provide job search strategy training.
Disseminate success stories
More interview practice and training
Survey inmates to determine what was learned by participation.

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Provide means for more contact with community education resources for providing more services to inmate population.
Pre-screen inmates before release to let employers know they are available.

7. What follow-up activities to today's activities would benefit the inmates?

Skill training in interview techniques
Verbal skill training
Real interviews
Create database of companies willing to hire ex-offenders.
More contact with employers
Job referrals
Training in ethics, problem solving, and leadership

8. After experiencing the job fair, how do you feel about the impact of this program on crime and recidivism?

☐ No Change ☐ Better n=9=36% ☐ Much better n=16=64%

9. For the next job fair, what changes in the program format would you like to see?

During the institution tours, would like to observe the inmates in actual training situations.
Inmates should be required to create a formal list of goals.
Better resumes.
Some of the participants wanted a 10-15 minute break in order to contact their offices.
Video tape the interviews for use as a critique tool.

10. Please offer additional comments:

Inmates were well prepared.
Companies should bring pictures and company literature for the inmates.

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